

# Time Machine (1915): Phone to Pacific from the Atlantic

By New York Times, adapted by Newsela staff on 08.04.16

Word Count **424**



Alexander Graham Bell is shown on the telephone at the opening of the New York-Chicago long distance telephone line, Oct. 18, 1892. Photo: Wikipedia

*Editor's Note: This article was printed in the New York Times on January 26, 1915. The day before, the first telephone call was made across the country. However, someone may have made a call from New York to California before that. People may have made calls when testing out the phone line.*

Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone. On October 9, 1876, Dr. Bell and Thomas A. Watson talked by telephone. Mr. Watson used to work for Dr. Bell. One of them was in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The other was in Boston, just two miles away. It was the first telephone conversation.

Yesterday afternoon the two men talked by telephone. It was the first voice heard across the country. They spoke over a 3,400-mile telephone wire. Dr. Bell was in New York City and Mr. Watson was in San Francisco, California.

Dr. Bell picked up the phone in front of him. Mr. Watson picked up his phone. Dr. Bell said, "Mr. Watson, are you there?"

Mr. Watson said he heard Dr. Bell's voice clearly.

Then Dr. Bell picked up a copy of the 1875 telephone. He spoke through it.

"Hello, Mr. Watson," he said. "Can you hear me?"

Mr. Watson said he could hear Dr. Bell perfectly.

Dr. Bell smiled. People had laughed at his phone in 1875.

## **Bell and Watson Make History**

Dr. Bell told of the first telephone call in history. On March 10, 1876, Bell and Watson were experimenting with the telephone in Boston. Dr. Bell was in his room on the top floor. Mr. Watson in his room on the floor below. Wires ran between the two rooms. Dr. Bell spoke into the phone in his room. He said, "Mr. Watson, come here, I want you." The same minute Mr. Watson ran into Mr. Bell's room. He shouted, "I heard you. I could hear what you said." The two inventors knew that their dream of a telephone had come true.

Yesterday, Dr. Bell repeated his words to Mr. Watson in San Francisco. "Mr. Watson, come here, I want you," he said. Mr. Watson said it would take him a week to get there this time.

The charge for a telephone conversation is \$20.70 for the first three minutes. The equipment costs \$2 million. It will take about 10 minutes to put a call through.

In the line, there are four wires and 13,600 miles of copper wire. There are almost 6,000 pounds of copper in the entire line. The line crosses 13 states. It is held up by 130,000 telephone poles.

## Quiz

- 1 Read the following sentence from the first paragraph of the article.

*Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone.*

What does the word "invented" mean in the sentence above?

- (A) improved
- (B) created
- (C) fixed
- (D) planned

- 2 Read the following sentence from the section "Bell and Watson Make History."

*The charge for a telephone conversation is \$20.70 for the first three minutes.*

What does the word "charge" mean in the sentence above?

- (A) tax
- (B) energy
- (C) price
- (D) ticket

- 3 What is the purpose of the introduction (paragraphs 1-8)?

- (A) to show where the event occurred
- (B) to connect to an earlier event
- (C) to highlight who was at the event
- (D) to show how long the event took

- 4 Which paragraph from the section "Bell and Watson Make History" gives information about the inventors' goal?

## Answer Key

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**Paragraph 9:**

**Dr. Bell told of the first telephone call in history. On March 10, 1876, Bell and Watson were experimenting with the telephone in Boston. Dr. Bell was in his room on the top floor. Mr. Watson in his room on the floor below. Wires ran between the two rooms. Dr. Bell spoke into the phone in his room. He said, "Mr. Watson, come here, I want you." The same minute Mr. Watson ran into Mr. Bell's room. He shouted, "I heard you. I could hear what you said." The two inventors knew that their dream of a telephone had come true.**

